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THE SYRIAC TEXT OF THE CHINESE NESTORIAN TABLET.

BY PROFESSOR ISAAC H. HALL,
Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Nine years ago I published in the *Proceedings of the American Oriental Society* (October, 1886, pp. cxxiv-cxxvi) a note of corrections of the Syriac text of the Chinese Nestorian Tablet of Singan Fu, as published by Assemani in Tom. III., Pars ii. of his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*. My corrections were chiefly based on an impression of the tablet then recently sent to the American Bible Society, and containing the entire inscription. I had not then observed that Assemani had made a second comparison of his printed text with an impression in the Vatican Library at Rome, and had already made a number of the corrections indicated by me, with others not quite right. (See, in unpagged portion of the prefatory matter of above volume, under VII. of "Codices Syriaci," etc.)

I have collected much material respecting this tablet, but never yet found the time to compile a complete and careful account; and I fear that the work, all the more necessary because of the numerous sketchy and fragmentary accounts often published in the religious journals, must be done by some other hand.

Meanwhile it is quite practicable to print an accurate Syriac text; and this is the object of this paper. I have seen enough of the various impressions to know that none are perfect; and among them I have seen some which would fully justify Assemani's wrong readings. But from a number taken together the right reading can easily and certainly be obtained. On the principal part of the Syriac inscription, that on the lower part of the face of the stone, there is scarcely a single doubtful point. It is on the edges, of which impressions in America are few, that the troublesome parts appear; and it is on one of the edges that the later Chinese inscription interferes somewhat with both the Syriac and the Chinese ancient writing.

נעמל עתכית עממל דמל (5.)

עכב עממלל דלענדלל

אעמל עמל סלל דללל

דעלללל עמ עממללללל

דעמלל עממללללללל

דללללל דללל עכלל (10.)

(Chinese characters.) .. דלללל

דלל עממללל עמ

מלדמל עמללללללללל

ממלללל עממל

עמלללללללל .. (15.)

(Chinese characters.) עמלללללל

(Line of Chinese characters.)

עמללל עממל עמלללללל

עמל עמל דללל עמללל

עמלל (20.)

(Three lines of Chinese characters.)

And on the right-hand side of the face; Assemani's *Classis II.* of this portion:

דלל עממל עמללללללל עמלל עמלללללל

In only one word above do I differ from a seemingly obvious reading. The proper name in line 16, where *Sabariesu'* would be expected, and is read by Assemani, seems to me to read, in all the impressions, *Sabraniesu'* (*i. e.*, Our Hope Jesus); and the stroke making the *nun* seems certainly to me a real part of the writing, and not a scratch. Otherwise, too, there would be a gap in the writing, or an unaccountable empty space. Old Athanasius Kircher left out the *beth* but inserted the *nun*. The result was, as Assemani says, "nullo sensu"; but it shows that the letter *nun* was there more than two and a half centuries ago. The name *Iesusabran*, the same with the component words in reverse order,

occurs elsewhere, *e. g.*, in the recently discovered History of Mar Yabalaha and Rabban Šauma.

The inscription on the left-hand edge is written in columns across the edge, beginning with the upper one. The first column has eleven lines, and forms Assemani's *Classis I*. We give it line for line:

- (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ (1.)
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ (5.)
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ (10.)
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ

Next, the second column on the left edge; Assemani's *Classis II*, line for line:

- (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ (1.)
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ
 ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ (5.)
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ

Next, the third column on the left edge; Assemani's *Classis III*, line for line. Several of the lines are more or less seriously interfered with by the late Chinese inscription. The second line retains at present only a = legible; but both Assemani and Kircher give it as I here give it, and it is doubtless correct:

- (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ (1.)
 (Chinese characters.) ܡܕܢܬܐ ܡܕܢܬܐ

(Chinese characters.)	آمد	
(Chinese characters.)	خدم	
(Chinese characters.)	خدم	(5.)
(Chinese characters.)	مدسل	
(Chinese characters.)	مدسل	
(Chinese characters.)	مدسل	
(Chinese characters.)	مدسل	
(Chinese characters.)	مدسل	
(Chinese characters.)	مدسل	(10.)
(Chinese characters.)	خدم	
(Chinese characters.)	مدسل	
(Chinese characters.)	خدم	

In this column, lines 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 are the ones interfered with by the late Chinese inscription. Line 6, however, is the only one besides the second line that has to be left in any doubt; and that doubt is merely whether the name is given after the Oriental form, *مدسل*, or after the Greek form *مدسل*. The three last letters are utterly obliterated by a vertical stroke of a late Chinese character, which, however, seems to me scarcely wide enough to have removed the long low stroke of the final *nun* of the Oriental form, and I have therefore adopted the Greek form. Both forms occur elsewhere on the stone. Assemani, however, gives the Oriental form; and the late inscription was not cut for more than a century after his time, and probably more than two centuries later than the impressions he used. Assemani's transcription is not generally so accurate as to lead me to trust him in a dubious point; and as it is, the conclusion adopted seems best sustained. In no other case can there be a reasonable doubt about the reading.

Next, the fourth column on the left edge; Assemani's *Classis IV.*, line for line. Here the late Chinese inscription has seriously interfered with lines 1 and 7, but only line 1 is doubtful. Here the late inscription has damaged all but the first four letters, and left only two certain, but the remnants of the others confirm Assemani's reading of them. Kircher's is all wrong; and Asse-

mani's is wrong as to the first part of the word. In the reading I give, which follows Assemani in the doubtful part, I consider it doubtful only whether the second *olaph* should not be some other letter:

(Chinese characters.)	ام و سعات	(1.)
(Chinese characters.)	مجلس	
(Chinese characters.)	المدى	
(Chinese characters.)	مجلس	
(Chinese characters.)	امس	(5.)
(Chinese characters.)	مجلس	
(Chinese characters.)	مجلس	
(Chinese characters.)	مدى	
(Chinese characters.)	مجلس	
(Chinese characters.)	امس	(10.)
(Chinese characters.)	مجلس	

On the right-hand edge are three columns, the reading everywhere plain, and scarcely marred.

The first column; *Classis V.* of Assemani, line for line:

(Chinese characters.)	محمد	(1.)
(Chinese characters.)	محمد بن عبد الله	
(Chinese characters.)	محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب	
(Chinese characters.)	محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب	
(Chinese characters.)	محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب	(5.)
(Chinese characters.)	محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب	
(Chinese characters.)	محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب	
(Chinese characters.)	محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب	
(Chinese characters.)	محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب	(10.)
	محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب	

Next, the second column on right-hand edge; Assemani's *Classis VI.*, line for line:

(Chinese characters.)	محمّد ملحم	(1.)
(Chinese characters.)	خبرمعه	
(Chinese characters.)	معدو	
(Chinese characters.)	محمّد	
(Chinese characters.)	معلم	(5.)
(Chinese characters.)	محمّد خطّی	
(Chinese characters.)	مخبرمعه	
(Chinese characters.)	معلم	
(Chinese characters.)	معدو	
(Chinese characters.)	معلم	(10.)
(Chinese characters.)	معدو	
(Chinese characters.)	معلم	
(Chinese characters.)	معلم	

And the third column on the right-hand edge; Assemani's *Classis VII.*, line for line:

(Chinese characters.)	معلم	(1.)
(Chinese characters.)	معلم	
(Chinese characters.)	معلم	
	معلم	
(Chinese characters.)	معلم	

It may be a matter of convenience to some readers to have a translation appended. I here give it, following the same order in which the text is given above:

Line on left side of face:

In the days of the Father of Fathers (*i. e.*, Patriarch) Mar Ḥannanieshu' (*Nestorian*, Ḥannanisho'), Catholicus, Patriarch.

Lines on the face at the foot:

In the year one thousand and ninety and two of the Greeks [*i. e.*, A. D. 781] Mar Iezdebuzid, priest and chorepiscopus of the

royal city Cumdan, son of the late [*lit.*, rest his soul] Milis, priest of Balch a city of Techoristan, erected this table of stone, on which are inscribed the dispensation of our Saviour and the preaching of our fathers to the king of the Chinese. Adam, deacon, son of Iezdebuzid, chorepiscopus; Mar Sergius, priest and chorepiscopus; Sabranieshu'; Gabriel, priest and archdeacon, and head of the church of Cumdan and of Sarga.

Line on the right side of face:

Adam, priest and chorepiscopus and *pappas* of Sinistan.

First column, left-hand edge (lines of the stone here separated by semi-colons):

Mar John, bishop; Isaac, priest; Joel, priest; Michael, priest; George, priest; Mahadad Gushnasp, priest; Meshichadad [*i. e.*, Beloved of Messiah], priest; Ephraim, priest; Abi, priest; David, priest; Moses, priest.

Second column on left-hand edge:

Bacus (or Bacchus), priest, monk; Elias, priest, monk; Moses, priest and monk; 'Ebedieshu' (*Nestorian*, 'Odisho'), priest and monk; Simeon, priest of Cabra; John, deacon and monk [the last word abbreviated].

Third column, left-hand edge:

Aaron; Peter; Job; Luke; Matthew; John; Ieshu'ammeh; John; Sabarieshu'; Ieshu'dad; Luke; Constantine; Noah.

Fourth column, left-hand edge:

Izdespas; John; Enosh; Mar Sergius; Isaac; John; Mar Sergius; Pusi; Simeon; Isaac; John.

Right-hand edge, first column:

Jacob (or James), priest; Mar Sergius, priest and chorepiscopus; Gigoi, priest and archdeacon of Cumdan and Macrina; Paul, priest; Simeon, priest; Adam, priest; Elias, priest; Isaac, priest; John, priest; John, priest; Simeon, priest and elder.

Right-hand edge, second column:

Jacob (or James), church custodian (*aedituus*); 'Ebedieshu'; Ieshu'dad; Jacob (or James); John; Shu(b)chalemaran [*i. e.*, Praise-the-Lord]; Mar Sergius; Simeon; Ephraim; Zacharias; Cyriacus; Bacus (or Bacchus); Immanuel.

Right-hand edge, third column:

Gabriel; John; Solomon; Isaac; John.